



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

August 4, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – PHOENIX
HOUSE ORANGE COUNTY GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Phoenix House Orange County Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Phoenix House Incorporated. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Phoenix House Orange County Group Home is a forty-five bed facility, which provides care for children ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Phoenix House Orange County Group Home was providing services for one Los Angeles County DCFS child, four Los Angeles County Probation children, three Riverside County DCFS children, and thirty-one privately placed children.

Phoenix House Orange County Group Home is located in Orange County.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues, and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency has deficient areas that need to be addressed.

Phoenix House Orange County Group Home needs to provide children with sufficient recreational activities; maintain current court authorizations for all children on psychotropic medications; provide children with the required minimum allowance; allow children to manage their allowances and earnings as they choose; and encourage and assist children in creating and updating life books/photo albums.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:asl

http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer
Ron Plotts, Executive Director, Phoenix House Orange County
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Phoenix House
Orange County Group Home
1207 East Fruit Street
Santa Ana, California 92701
Phone: (714) 953-9373
License Number: (714) 543-8162
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Phoenix House Orange County Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean, and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include long and short-term goals. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services as identified in their NSPs.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children ample leisure time; however, the children are not provided with sufficient recreational activities. Children are given opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children are allowed to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

- 1. Phoenix House Orange County Management provide children with sufficient recreational activities.**

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

The child on psychotropic medication does not have a current court authorization. Documentation confirms that the child is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

The child is informed about his psychotropic medication, and is aware of his right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 2. Phoenix House Orange County Management maintain current court authorizations for all children on psychotropic medication.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size for interviews: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home’s policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to have private visitors, to make and receive personal telephone calls, and to send and receive unopened correspondence and mail. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are given opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

However, the Group Home does not provide children with the required minimum base allowance. Children are not permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

3. Phoenix House Orange County Management:

- a. Provide children with the required minimum allowance.**
- b. Allow children to manage their allowances and earnings as they choose.**
- c. Encourage and assist children in creating and updating life books/photo albums.**

Phoenix Academy of Orange County / 1207 East Fruit Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701 / 714-953-9373 / 714-953-9155 Fax

Phoenix House

Carla Carr, Group Home Ombudsman
Department of Auditor-Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St., Room 515-A, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Fax (213) 346-9020

Dear Ms. Carr:

This is a response to a call for corrective action in your memorandum dated May 16, 2005. The following corrective action plan (CAP) addresses areas of deficiencies that were identified in the group home monitoring process that was conducted on April 26, 2005.

IV. Recreational activities Recommendation

1. Phoenix House of Orange County Management provides children with sufficient recreational activities.

Action: Phoenix House will provide residents with a minimum of two off-site recreational activities/trips on a monthly basis. The Supervising Senior Counselor will be responsible for scheduling and coordinating the trips. The procedure will commence on July 1, 2005.

V. Psychotropic Medication Recommendation

1. Phoenix House Orange County Management maintains current court authorizations for the child on psychotropic medication.

Action: Phoenix House has secured current court authorizations for all children on psychotropic medications. The procedure for securing and maintaining authorizations is the responsibility of the program nurse.

VII. Clothing and Allowance Recommendation

1. Phoenix House Orange County Management will provide all children with required minimum allowance; allow children to manage their allowance and earnings as they choose; encourage and assist children in creating and updating life books/photo album.

Action: 1) Phoenix House has raised the amount of allowance that each child receives so that it is equal to the minimum amount required. The amount given to each child will be recorded in a log. The Project Administrator will maintain the log and monitor the process of distribution.

Training was held on June 16, 2005 with all staff regarding the children being allowed to manage their allowances and earnings as they choose.

2) The Supervising Senior Counselor will monitor the process of ensuring that residents have freedom to manage their allowance/earnings. Life books and photo albums will be secured and or developed for each child. This process will begin on July 1, 2005 and will be monitored by a case manager.

We believe the aforementioned actions will address the areas of concerns. We appreciate your review and comments and look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Plotts", written over a horizontal line.

Ron Plotts
Managing Director